



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Apostle Islands
National Lakeshore

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Apostle Islands News Release

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National Park Rangers Rescue Capsized Kayakers at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore

On Wednesday August 17, 2011, thirteen kayakers associated with a commercially guided trip attempted to paddle from Meyers Beach to the sea caves in Apostle Islands National Lakeshore's mainland unit. Two kayakers capsized in 3-4 foot seas and were rescued by a private boater who transported them to Cornucopia. Eight additional kayakers from this group began struggling in rough water near the sea caves and requested assistance from National Park Service staff for a rescue. The remaining three kayakers were able to paddle safely back to Meyers Beach. A small craft advisory had been posted for the nearshore waters of Western Lake Superior that day and park rangers at Meyers Beach advised kayak groups, including this one, not to launch due to the existing and anticipated hazardous wave conditions. The National Park Service mobilized fifteen personnel and two vessels during this rescue operation. Other agencies involved in this rescue were South Shore Ambulance and the U.S. Coast Guard.

Waves at the mainland sea caves at the time of the launch were known to be 2-3 feet, according to the real time wave observation system (<http://www.seacaveswatch.org>). At the time of the rescue, seas had increased to 4-5 feet. Winds at Devils Island were 30 miles per hour, gusting to 35 miles per hour.

The National Park Service and U.S. Coast Guard encourage visitors to:

- Heed and understand weather forecasts and small craft advisories.
- Understand how the weather forecast will impact your trip.
- Be flexible in your trip plans.
- Stay within your ability. It is dangerous to be over confident.
- Continue to check current and expected weather as these can change quickly.
- Stay with your group.
- Have the proper equipment and know how to use it.
- Wear bright colored personal flotation devices.

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